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STRENGTHENING OF THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE OF THE UNITED NATIONS, INCLUDING SPECIAL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE

Letter dated 27 April 1995 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a statement of the Government of Ukraine on the problem of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant, issued on 20 April 1995 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you could have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly under item 20 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) Anatoli M. ZLENKO
Ambassador
Permanent Representative
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ANNEX

Statement of the Government of Ukraine on the problem of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant, issued on 20 April 1995

The programme of energy engineering development is one of the priorities in the further restructuring of the Ukrainian economy. Major importance in the implementation of this programme is attributed by the Government of Ukraine to persistent adherence to the principles of safe operation of nuclear stations and a constant increase of their safety levels.

The Government of Ukraine understands the concern expressed by the world community about the continuing operation of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant, which had caused so much sorrow to the peoples of Europe. To its regret, Ukraine had experienced itself all of the tragedy of an atomic catastrophe, and more than any other nation is interested in assuring that it will never happen again in the future. Confirming its accepted commitments as to the search for the possibility of shutting down the station, Ukraine does whatever it can to accelerate this process with necessary safety measures provided for all its stages.

In this regard a number of steps were taken from 1986 to 1994 with the purpose of plant modernization, which provided a substantially higher level of the station's safety. A special programme was worked out specifically for the Chernobyl plant, taking into account all available experience in increasing the safety of the nuclear power plant, equipped with RBMK-type units and, in particular, that of a Leningrad one. We have to understand that under the conditions of an unbalanced economic system, an energy crisis and lack of the economic capability for increasing the import of organic energy fuel to compensate for the existing deficit of power supply at the expense of traditional energy production, Ukraine, alone, is unable to shut down in a short time the Chernobyl nuclear plant, which is one of the biggest facilities in its energy sector. The decommissioning of the plant must follow the implementation of preparatory steps, including stabilization of the energy supply system in Ukraine at large, construction of coal, steam and gas or nuclear plant units equivalent in power to the decommissioned ones and located near the town of Slavutich, setting up spent nuclear fuel and radioactive wastes storage, solution of the "Shelter" problem and its transformation into an ecologically safe system, as well as scientific and technological support of the decommissioning of the plant under the specific environment of the Chernobyl seclusion zone. Alongside technical problems, it is also necessary to solve the social security problem of the plant's personnel.

According to the assessment by experts, to stop the operation of the nuclear power plant will lead to accumulated economic losses amounting to US$ 4 billion. The realization of such a large-scale programme is impossible without financial aid to Ukraine by the world community. The financial aid provided should be used purposefully for the implementation of a set of measures connected with preparation for the decommissioning of the nuclear power plant, including the transformation of the "Shelter" project into an ecologically safe system. Such an approach, combining the efforts of Ukraine with the assistance

of Western States, will promote the soonest possible accumulation of necessary funds for preparatory work and consecutive decommissioning of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant and will balance the national energy supply system until the problem of the compensating powers of energy production is solved.

Comprehending the responsibility before the world community for strengthening the international nuclear safety regime, Ukraine will take all necessary measures to guarantee an appropriate safety level of the energy engineering facilities. The principle of safe use of nuclear energy is the core in the integrated energy sector reconstruction which began in Ukraine. The Government of Ukraine will have enough political will and firmness to step the operation of any existing nuclear power plant units provided objective data on their unsatisfactory safety conditions are available.

The Government of Ukraine expresses its gratitude to the international organizations and Governments of many countries for paying attention to the problems of the energy sector of our State, and assures them that the preparation of the programme of Action Plan implementation in the framework of the "Ukraine-G-7" Task Force will contribute to the definition and realization of the strategy of optimal reconstruction in the energy sector of Ukraine. One of the possible ways to obtain an objective analysis and to solve the set of problems of scientific and technological support for the decommissioning of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant could be the establishment of an international research and technological centre with the participation of leading experts in the sphere of nuclear safety from the whole world.

On the eve of the ninth anniversary of the sad date of the Chernobyl disaster, which had been reflected painfully in the hearts of mankind and led to reconsideration of the strategy of nuclear energy sector development all over the world, the Ukrainian Government has a favour to ask Governments of other States and the heads of international organizations: to inform public opinion about the factual situation at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant and the efforts Ukraine is undertaking to provide for necessary levels of safety as well as a solution of all complex problems connected with this nuclear power plant decommissioning.